

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A loading mechanism for loading an information recording medium in a predetermined position and unloading the information recording medium therefrom, the loading mechanism comprising:

a frame;

a tray on which the information recording medium is placeable in a predetermined position, the tray being movable in first and second opposite directions between a first position where the information recording medium is contained completely inside said frame and a second position where the information recording medium is exposed completely outside said frame, the tray including a groove part extending along the first and second opposite directions; and

at least three projections arranged on said frame at predetermined intervals along the first and second opposite directions, the projections including first and second guide and support parts forming first and second ends of the arrangement of the projections, the first and second guide and support parts coming into substantially point or linear contact with the groove part of said tray so as to guide and support said tray when said tray is in the second position.

2. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

each of the first and second guide and support parts includes side faces in third and fourth opposite directions that are perpendicular to the first and second opposite directions in a plane parallel to a plane on which said tray is movable; and

at least one of the side faces of each of the first and second guide and support parts includes a curved part.

3. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 2, wherein the curved part of the one of the side faces of each of the first and second guide and support parts has as large a radius of curvature as possible within a range that allows the curved part to come into substantially point or linear contact with the groove part of said tray.

4. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein each of the first and second guide and support parts has a pin-like shape.

5. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of the projections which one is positioned between the first and second guide and support parts is prevented from being in contact with said tray in a normal state.

6. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 5, wherein the one of the projections comprises a pair of pin parts and a plate-like part positioned between the pin parts to connect the pin parts, the pin parts and the plate-like part being formed integrally with one another and arranged along the first and second opposite directions.
7. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 5, wherein the one of the projections is a plate-like connection that connects the first and second guide and support parts.
8. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein a distance between the first and second guide and support parts is substantially maximized within a range that allows the first and second guide and support parts to be provided to said frame and to guide and support said tray when said tray is in the second position.
9. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a drive mechanism that drives said tray between the first and second positions.
10. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 9, wherein said drive mechanism comprises a motor.
11. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim

1, wherein the information recording medium is an optical disk.

12. (Original) A loading mechanism for loading an information recording medium in a predetermined position and unloading the information recording medium therefrom, the loading mechanism comprising:

a tray on which the information recording medium is placeable in a predetermined position, the tray including at least three projections arranged along first and second opposite directions, the projections including first and second projections forming first and second ends of the arrangement of the projections; and

a frame including a guide groove that guides the projections of said tray, the guide groove extending along the first and second opposite directions,

wherein:

the tray is movable in the first and second opposite directions between a first position where the information recording medium is contained completely inside said frame and a second position where the information recording medium is exposed completely outside said frame; and

the first and second projections come into substantially point or linear contact with the groove part of said tray when said tray is in the second position.

13. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a drive mechanism that drives said tray between the first and second positions.

14. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 13, wherein said drive mechanism comprises a motor.

15. (Original) The loading mechanism as claimed in claim 12, wherein the information recording medium is an optical disk.

16. (Original) A drive unit performing at least information reproduction among information recording on, information reproduction from, and information erasure from an information recording medium, the drive unit comprising:

a main body; and

a loading mechanism as set forth in claim 1, the loading mechanism being attached to said main body,

wherein:

specific processing including the information reproduction is performed on the information recording medium in the first position; and

the information recording medium is placed on or removed from said tray in the second position.

17. (Original) A drive unit performing at least information

reproduction among information recording on, information reproduction from, and information erasure from an information recording medium, the drive unit comprising:

a main body; and

a loading mechanism as set forth in claim 12, the loading mechanism being attached to said main body,

wherein:

specific processing including the information reproduction is performed on the information recording medium in the first position; and

the information recording medium is placed on or removed from said tray in the second position.

18. (Original) An information processing apparatus, comprising:

a drive unit as set forth in claim 16;

an input device inputting information;

a display unit displaying information;

a storage part storing information; and

a control part controlling an operation of the information processing apparatus.

19. (Original) An information processing apparatus, comprising:

a drive unit as set forth in claim 17;
an input device inputting information;
a display unit displaying information;
a storage part storing information; and
a control part controlling an operation of the
information processing apparatus.

20-31. (Canceled)